

REMARKS

The foregoing amendment amends claims 1, 5, 10, 13, 15 and 20 and cancels claims 4, 6 and 16. Now pending in the application are claims 1, 3, 5, 7-15 and 17-20, of which claims 1, 10, 15 and 20 are independent. The following comments address all stated grounds for rejection and place the presently pending claims, as identified above, in condition for allowance.

Claim Amendments

Applicants amend claims 1, 5, 10, 13, 15 and 20 to clarify the scope of the claimed invention. In particular, claim 1 is amended to incorporate the subject matter recited in dependent claims 4 and 6. Claims 4 and 6 are subsequently canceled. Claims 10, 15 and 20 are also amended to incorporate like limitations. Claims 5 and 13 are amended to comply with amended claim 1. No new matter is added. Applicants therefore submit that the foregoing claim amendments should be entered and considered.

Rejection of Claims 1, 3, 10, 11, 15 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1, 3, 10, 11, 15 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Publication No. 2000-223144 (“Kenji”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,872,975 (“Benson”). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for the following reasons.

In the foregoing claim amendments, Applicants amend independent claims 1, 10, 15 and 20 to incorporate the subject matter recited in dependent claims 4 and 6, which are not rejected as unpatentable over Kenji and Benson. Applicants therefore submit that the rejection of claims 1, 3, 10, 11, 15 and 20 is moot, and request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 1, 3, 10, 11, 15 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Rejection of Claims 4-9, 13, 14 and 16-19 under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 4-9, 13, 14 and 16-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Publication No. 2000-223144 (“Kenji”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,120,787

(“Yargeau”) or U.S. Patent No. 6,759,154 (“O’Brien”). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for the following reasons.

Independent claims 1, 10 and 15 recite *a purifier for the condensed water, the purifier being a combustor for the off-gas discharged from the fuel cell*. Claims 4-9, 13, 14 and 16-19 depend upon one of independent claims 1, 10 and 15, and add separate and patentable limitations to the independent claims.

With the structure of the claimed invention, *by utilizing the combustor as the purifier*, the combustion of the off gas and the purification and discharge of the discharge-restricted components, such as hydrocarbon (HC), can be performed by a single component. See, the specification, page 6, lines 7-10. Furthermore, since the combustion of the off gas and the purification of the condensed water can be performed at the same time with the single combustor, the claimed invention can reduce necessary structural parts or elements, thereby reducing the manufacturing cost of a fuel cell system. See, the specification, page 6, lines 11-12.

Applicants respectfully submit that none of the cited prior art references teach or suggest *a purifier for the condensed water, the purifier being a combustor for the off-gas discharged from the fuel cell*, as recited in claims 1, 10 and 15. The Office Action notes that Kenji does not teach a purifier. See, the Office Action, page 3, line 12. Yargeau and O’Brien are cited by the Examiner to compensate for the deficiencies of Kenji.

Yargeau discloses purifying condensed water with a filter (30) and a demineralizer (32). See, Yargeau, Column 4, lines 53-64. Yargeau, however, does not teach or suggest purifying the condensed water with a combustor. O’Brien discloses purification devices provided in a storage vessel or reservoir (54), which merely include filters, deionizers, and distillers. See, O’Brien, Column 4, lines 50-55. O’Brien, however, does not teach or suggest purifying the condensed water with a combustor.

In light of the foregoing claim amendments and arguments, Applicants submit that the combination of Kenji, Yargeau and O’Brien fails to teach or suggest all of the limitations of

claims 1, 10 and 15. Claims 4-9, 13, 14 and 16-19, which depend upon one of claims 1, 10 and 15, are not rendered obvious over the cited prior art references. Applicants therefore request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 4-9, 13, 14 and 16-19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), and pass the claims to allowance.

Rejection of Claims 10 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 10 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Publication No. 2000-223144 (“Kenji”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,162,558 (“Borup”). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for the following reasons.

Amended claim 10 recites *a purifier for the condensed water, the purifier being a combustor for the off-gas discharged from the fuel cell*. Claim 12 depends upon claim 10, and add separate and patentable limitations to claim 10.

Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of the cited prior art references does not teach or suggest *a purifier for the condensed water, the purifier being a combustor for the off-gas discharged from the fuel cell*, as recited in claim 10. The Office Action notes that Kenji does not teach a purifier. See, the Office Action, page 3, line 12. Borup is cited by the Examiner to provide teachings for the CO remover recited in claim 12. Borup, however, does not teach or suggest a purifier for the condensed water, the purifier being a combustor for the off-gas discharged from the fuel cell, as recited in claim 10.

In light of the foregoing claim amendments and arguments, Applicants submit that the combination of Kenji and Borup fails to teach or suggest all of the limitations of claim 10. Claim 12, which depends upon claim 10, is not rendered obvious over the cited prior art references. Applicants therefore request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 10 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), and pass the claims to allowance.

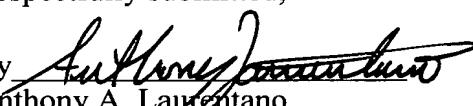
Conclusion

In view of the above amendment, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Applicant believes no fee is due with this statement. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 12-0080, under Order No. SIW-026 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

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Respectfully submitted,

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